

## **HJR 18 Workgroup Meeting**

**Thursday September 6, 2012**

**Locations: Wilmington and Milford DFS Offices (w/Teleconference)**

1825 Faulkland Road, Wilmington, DE 19805, Rm. #199

247 Northeast Front Street, Milford, DE 19963, Conf. Rm.

### **In Attendance:**

Tania M. Culley, Esq. – Co-Chair  
Julia O’Hanlon – Co-Chair  
The Hon. William L. Chapman, Jr.  
The Hon. Barbara Crowell  
The Hon. Mardi F. Pyott  
Nathan Badell  
Rep. Michael Barbieri  
John Bates  
Amanda Brennan  
Rodney Brittingham  
Paul Calistro  
Sue Dougherty  
Sherfone Johnson

Christina Jones-Bey  
Felicia Kellum  
Eric Lloyd  
Gerard M.  
Mary Kate McLaughlin  
Julie Miller, Esq.  
Myiesha Miller  
Demetrius Pinder  
Susan Radecki  
Christella St. Juste  
Tasha Warren  
Keith Zirkle

### **Welcomes & Introductions**

Julia O’Hanlon welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

### **Approval of the Minutes**

Rodney Brittingham moved to approve the minutes, with Paul Calistro seconding. All in attendance approved.

### **Overview of Meeting Objectives and Intended Action Items**

Tania Culley explained that only those that have been officially appointed to this Committee can vote at this final meeting although all input and comments are welcome. The official appointees are: Judge Crowell and Judge Chapman (designated by Chief Judge Chandlee Johnson Coon); Mary Kate McLaughlin (designated by Cabinet Secretary Vivian Rapposelli); Julie Miller of the Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative; Rodney Brittingham (designated by Division of Family Services Director Vicky Kelly); Tania Culley of the Office of the Child Advocate; Representative Mike Barbieri; Youth Ethan S., Eric Lloyd, Amanda Brennan, Christella St. Juste, and Demetrius Pinder; Julia O’Hanlon (representing educational institutions); Paul Calistro (representing community organizations); and Nathan Badell (representing group homes or foster parents). The majority of the votes determine the outcome of each extended care criteria.

## **Primary Considerations for Shaping Delaware’s Extended Foster Care Program: Final Voting**

### ***Age***

The majority voted (8-0) in favor of extended care services being available to youth until age 21.

### ***Eligibility***

The majority voted (8-0) in favor of giving priority of edibility for extended care services to youth who are experiencing care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. In addition, the majority (11-1-0) agreed that youth who may have exited foster care due to guardianship or adoption between the ages of 16 and 18 will also be eligible for extended care services, regardless. No needs assessment is required to be eligible. This is consistent with current Independent Living services eligibility. The majority voted (0-12-0) that youth who have reunified with family members between the ages 16-18 will be eligible for extended care services, based on a needs assessment. The options regardless, needs assessment, and no were given again. With the same voting options, the majority voted (1-5-7) to not allow out of state youth eligibility for Delaware’s extended care program. Using the same voting options, the majority voted (6-4-3) to allow youth eligible for Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) to partake in extended care services, regardless.

If a youth is eligible based on the above criteria, the majority voted (13-0) the youth is required to enroll in an educational or vocational program and/or be working or volunteering in the community for a minimum number of hours per month. The majority voted (12-1) that youth should be given a six-month window to comply with this eligibility requirement. In addition, the majority voted (11-1, with 1 abstention) for exceptions for youth whose disabilities prevent them for complying with these requirements to be developed.

### ***Re-Entry***

The majority voted (13-0) that there be no restrictions on the number of times a youth can “re-enter” extended care services until age 21—meaning that if a youth ages out of foster care, then he or she should be eligible to receive extended care services at any time until age 21. However, the majority voted (14-0) that there should be a limit to the number of times a youth may reenter extended care from ages 18-21. This limit will be set in an internal task force once extended care is implemented.

### ***Legal Jurisdiction***

The voting members decided that based on the voting options (court involvement in every extended care case, as needed, or never) that court oversight and continued legal representation should be voluntary and considered on a case-by-case basis (0-14-0). This is consistent with the current extended jurisdiction statute 10 Del. C. § 929. Using the same voting options, the majority voted (2-11-1) that Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) and Guardian at Litems (GALs) would be formally involved only as needed, consistent with the current extended jurisdiction statute 10 Del. C. § 929.

### ***Case Management***

The majority voted (14-0) that current Independent Living (IL) case management design should remain in place recognizing the need for supplemental resources and assessment with regard to placement and other services may be necessary. Further, the majority voted (14-0) the IL program managers and service providers make reasonable efforts to have contact with youth receiving extended care services at least monthly and more frequently as needed. The committee recommends that the current IL case plans, together with the requirements set forth by the youths’ housing provider(s), serve as an agreement between youth and their IL case workers regarding parameters for extended care.

### ***Housing/Living Arrangements***

The majority voted (13-0, with 1 abstention) that housing resources for youth receiving extended care services be broad and should fully utilize Delaware's current housing options. An array of settings and living arrangements should include supervised-living, independent-living, and college dormitory settings, as well as apartments and group and foster homes. The majority voted (14-0) to allow each housing option to implement their own regulations and the youth would then choose the best environment based on those regulations. The majority also voted (14-0) to allow the youth the option of out of state housing, such as in the case of a college or university campus.

### ***Financial Assistance***

The majority voted (13-1) to allow young adults in extended care to receive a stipend in addition to maintenance payments. In a vote of 13-1, with 1 abstention, the majority decided the stipend amount would be based on an individual assessment process. In addition, by a vote of 8-6-0 (voting options are regardless, opt-out provision for good cause, and no), youth can receive a stipend only if they take part in some form of financial-literacy training or expanded financial services.

### ***Self-Sufficiency***

The majority voted (14-0) that the benchmarks or assessments developed in the past five years and/or being utilized by the current IL system (e.g., "Blue Books, IL provider benchmarks) be reviewed and assessed to determine whether updates are necessary to support Delaware's extended care services. The group recommends that the DYOI Transitions Working Group is an appropriate, multidisciplinary forum to accomplish this task.

### ***Public Comment***

There was no public comment.

### ***Path Forward***

A report from this committee must be submitted to the Governor and General Assembly by September 17, 2012. The committee voted 13-0 to give authority to Mary Kate McLaughlin, Rodney Brittingham, Tania Culley, Julia O'Hanlon, and Julie Miller to write the report and send to the appropriate parties. This Committee's work is now completed and the Co-Chairs thanked everyone for their significant contributions and hard work – Committee members and regular participants. The Co-Chairs were also thanked. The Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative (DYOI) regular Policy Working Group will meet on Wednesday, October 17, 2012 at the Murphey School in Dover from 5-6 pm. Future meeting dates will be arranged at that time. In addition, a DYOI Community Partnership Board meeting will be held October 29<sup>th</sup> from 10 am – 12 pm at the Delaware State Troopers Association Hall in Cheswold. These meetings are open to the public and all participants from the HJR18 Committee are welcome.